CHURCH HISTORY

Chapter 7 – The Church Survives and Grows Again

1. A Summary of the Growth of the Ancient Church
    a. *3 Big turns of the Church in 500 years: 1. Christians were driven out of its original camp in Jerusalem, marched forth into Judea and Samaria and as far as Antioch in Syria; 2. Under the leadership of Paul expanded to the great Gentile world of the Roman Empire; 3. In 313 gained the victory over heathenism in the Edict of Milan.*
2. Rome is the Center of a Great Empire
    a. *Now the Empire in the West is about to fall, while the Christian Church continues. But the fall of the Empire in the West will have a profound effect upon the whole history of the Church from this time on. (See Map for extent of the Empire)*
3. German Tribes Invade the Empire
    a. *In 376, the Huns and the Visigoths (West Goths) crossed the lower Danube to enter the Empire, (exactly one hundred years before the last emperor was removed by Odoacer) and soon joined by the Ostrogoths (East Goths)*
    b. *The Roman emperor Valens, in 378, battled them near the city of Adrianople but was annihilated and killed; Theodosius (the successor) subdued the Goths; the barbarians left the eastern part of the Empire alone and continued to exist as the Eastern or Byzantine Empire throughout the entire Middle Ages*
    c. *Goths and other German tribes attacked the western part of the decaying empire (although still large), 100 years after - the barbarians conquered the western part of the empire - a time of great suffering and disaster, when Ambrose, Jerome, and Augustine lived*
4. The Empire Falls
    a. *In 410 Rome was sacked by the Goths under Alaric, invasion and occupation continued until 455*
    b. *The Empire fell, but the Church survived. Many of the barbarian tribes had accepted Christianity and respected the bishop of Rome. The position of the Church was improved by the successes of the bishop of Rome in protecting the people to a certain extent from the worst excesses of the barbarians when the emperor had not been able to protect them.*
5. The Distribution of Peoples (refer to map)
6. The Church Faces a Two-Fold Task
    a. *The Church once more, as in its beginning, faced a heathen world. However, there was a difference. The heathen to whom it now had to bring the Gospel were not civilized, but barbarous. And so the Church, standing at the beginning of the Middle Ages, saw set before it a two- fold task: that of Christianizing and that of educating the new nations.*
7. The Ancient Civilization is Preserved
    a. *The barbarians were ignorant but not stupid. Stupidity is incurable; ignorance can be cured by education. But the barbarians were not totally ignorant.*
    b. *The Church spared the destruction of a civilization because of the teachings and education of the Christians*
8. The Franks are Converted
    a. *The Franks, under the leadership of their king, Clovis, gradually extended their rule over all Gaul.*
    b. *The king's conversion meant a conversion of all tribesmen, and every tribe they subdue also meant the same*
9. The British Isles are Christianized
    a. *Before the fall of the Empire in the West, Christianity was introduced into Britain by Christian Roman soldiers. In the last years of the Empire in the West, a British monk, St. Patrick, became "the Apostle of Ireland." By the time of his death in 461 the Church was firmly established in that country.*
10. Germany and the Netherlands are Evangelized
    a. *One of the greatest gods of the German heathen was Thor. Boniface cut down a big oak which was believed to be sacred to that god. The heathen looked on with awe, expecting that Thor, the god of thunder, would strike him down with lightning. When nothing happened to him the heathen gave up their belief in Thor, and accepted Christianity.*
    b. *To this day Boniface is known as "the Apostle of Germany."*
11. Gregory Symbolizes the Medieval Church
    a. *Gregory the Great stood for anything that the Church is in the Middle Ages*
    b. *The first of the popes to acquire a broad political power - Gregory served as secular ruler by appointing heads of cities, by raising armies, and by making peace treaties*
    c. *Gregory taught (1) that the Lord's Supper is a repetition of the sacrifice of Christ, (2) that the saints can be of help to us, and (5) that there is a purgatory*